THE SWORD INTERVAL

COLORING TUTORIAL #2

Hey folks.

The past few weeks have been rough on me. Last week in particular, technical issues with my computer had me running back and forth trying to repair a struggling machine.

By the time I once again had a computer I could use to illustrate comics... there was no time left to make this week's episode.

I hate skipping updates, but there was nothing for it this week.

But I don't like leaving you with nothing,
so today we have another coloring tutorial.

Now, the last time I did one of these it was specific to Photoshop, which I realize might have only been handy to a few of you. Today I'm going to be speaking in broader terms that I hope are useful, or at least interesting, to more people.

Thank you once again for your
understanding and patience.

We start with the ***flat colors***, or ***base colors***. These are just the colors before any shading or effects are added to the piece.

I do my base colors as ***local colors***.
A local color is the color something appears as in even, bright lighting like a sunny day or a well-lit interior.

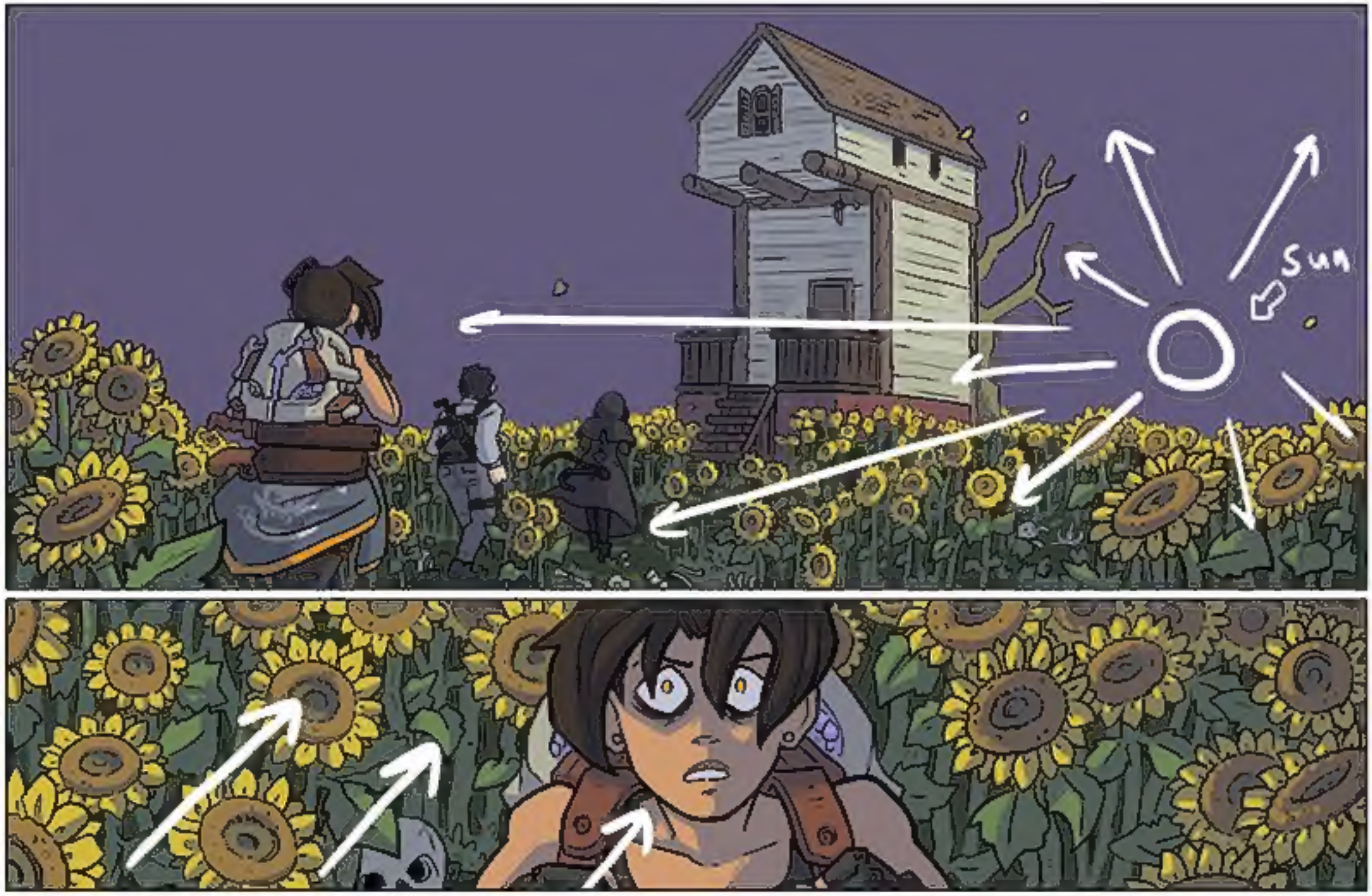
Because I use the same characters in dozens of different scenes with different lighting conditions, I find it simplest to always start with the same local colors, and adjust from there.

The next big step is ***shading***.

First, I make a copy of the base colors, and adjust that copy so that it's dark and monochromatic [in this case, purplish blue]. This will be the ***shading layer***.

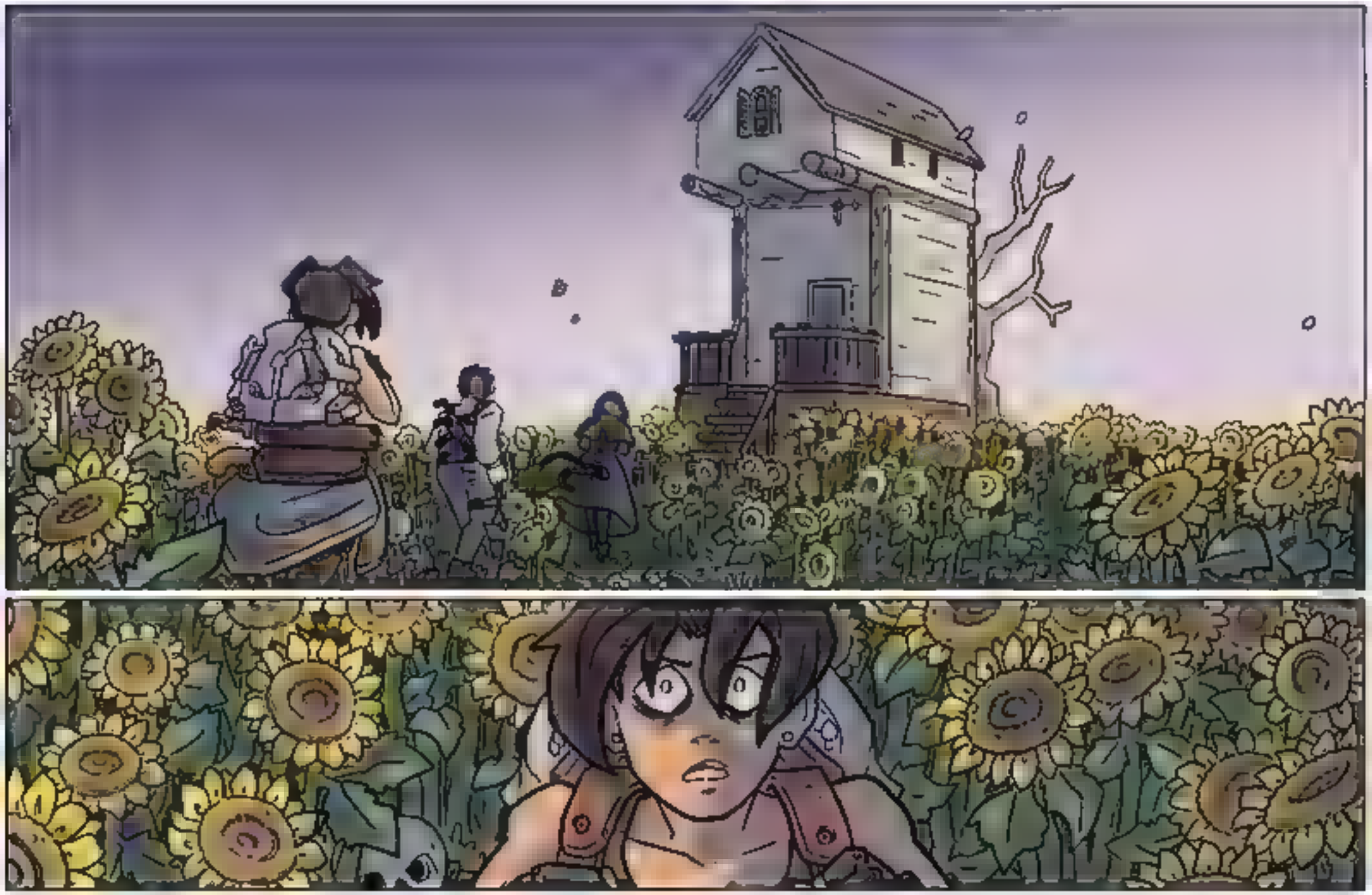
Note: If something would glow in the dark, such as fire or lights [or Fall's eyes], I erase that part of the shading layer in this step. I also don't shade the sky.

Next I make the shading layer somewhat transparent, so you can see some of the original base colors through it. The more transparent, the lower the contrast once we actually start shading.


Sun

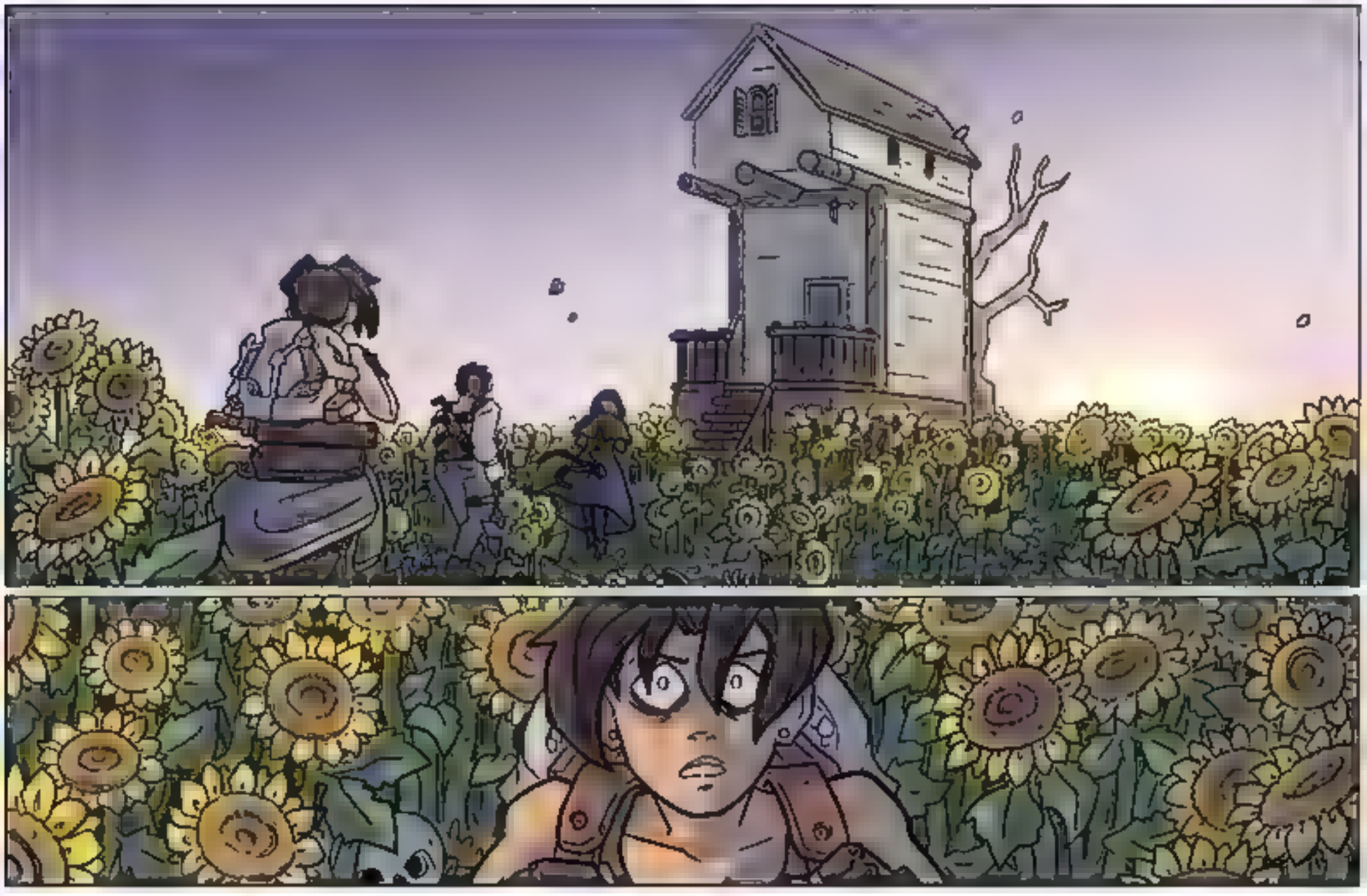
Okay, the next part is fun.
I picture where the light source is coming
from as beams radiating out of a single point.
Where those beams would touch a solid surface,
I remove the shading layer to fully expose
the base colors underneath.

This is what works best for me, but for you it might be easier to work in reverse – to start with everything light, and to paint in the shadows where they would be cast. Either way, the goal is to add some depth to the piece, and to use areas of contrasting light and dark to draw the reader's eye where you want it.

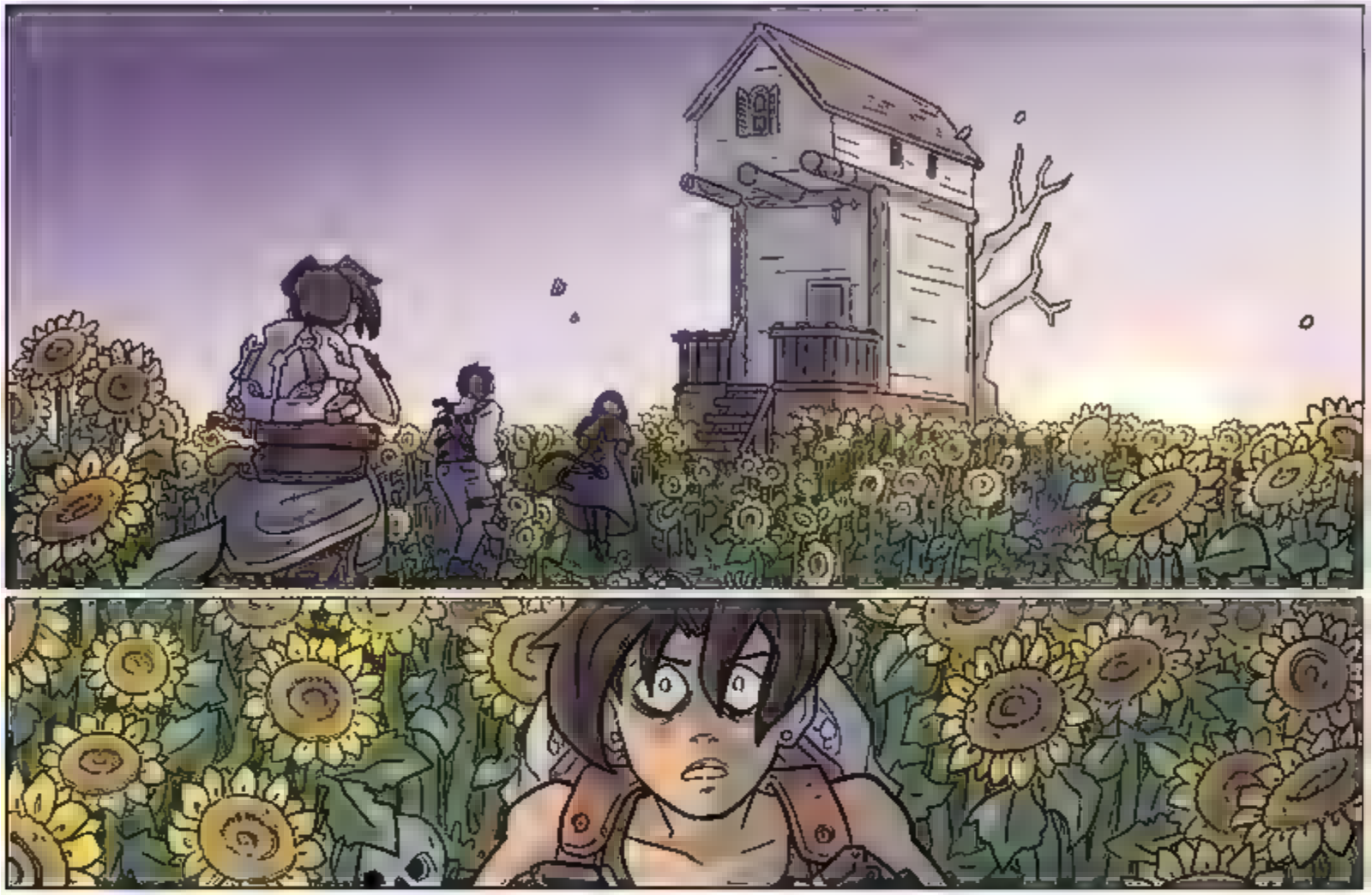


Let's start filling the sky in and adjusting those boring local colors. Because the primary light source here – the sky – is a pinkish purple, I take all of the areas that aren't shaded and give them a slight purple tint.

It's a subtle change, but I find it adds a lot.



As for the sky, I start with a gradient [light at the bottom, dark at the top] and add a little bit of a jagged texture to give it more character. Then I add in stars, suns, clouds, or whatever else is needed.



We're almost done. We're just polishing up the final colors slightly at this point, bringing in a warmer tone, and adding just a little bit of ***atmospheric perspective*** – a subtle haze that separates the foreground from the background. Basically, the further away something is, the less contrast and detail it has, particularly if your scene is foggy, dusty, or otherwise hazy.

Again, a subtle but helpful difference.

It can be a good idea in these final stages to look at your piece in black and white. This helps pinpoint areas where the contrast needs some work. My general rule is that if it still reads clearly in greys, then it should read clearly in color.

Lastly we add a little bit of highlights to make hair and eyes pop, and there we are. A finished piece.

So, that's my method for coloring comics.
I hope that was fun or maybe even helpful for some of you. My method is just one of many, and I encourage you to play around and find what works for you.

Happy creating.

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